

6/14/00

**National Cancer Institute
Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics
Chornobyl Oversight Panel
Meeting Summary and Action Items**

Meeting Date: May 1, 2000
Members Present: Patricia Hartge, Jay Lubin, Shelia Zahm (Chair)
Others Present: Gilbert Beebe, Ihor Masnyk, Sharon Miller, Jacob Robbins, Kathleen Stine, Terry Thomas
Next Meeting: July 17, 2000 - 10:30am-12:30pm - EPS Conference Room 7107

Many of the members and other regular attendees of the Chornobyl Oversight Panel (COP) meetings were not able to be present because of travel commitments related to the Chornobyl research program.

I. Review of Meeting Summaries and Action Items from Past COP Meetings

The summaries and action items from the January 10, 2000, and the April 10, 2000, meetings were accepted without correction.

II. Thyroid Cancer Study

A. Binational Advisory Group (BAG) Request for Reports and Reviews

Dr. Bruce Napier, Chair of the BAG, has relayed to Dr. Masnyk requests from BAG members to receive thorough briefing from NCI before they meet overseas this fall, to copies of all pertinent reviews as they become available, and to be invited to any future review meetings we might hold (e.g., the November tri-national meetings).

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Send BAG members the UK and BR quarterly reports	Dr. Masnyk	Quarterly	BAG
2. Send BAG members the COP minutes and other COP reports	Ms. Duane	As available	BAG
3. Send BAG members the review from the ACERER subcommittee	Dr. Masnyk	July, 2000	BAG
4. Invite BAG members to the November tri-national meeting	Dr. Masnyk		BAG

B. Update on Action Items

Dr. Terry Thomas reviewed the progress on the "Action Items from International Meeting on Collaborative Chornobyl Thyroid Research Projects," dated 1/00.

1. **Response Rates:** The response rates in Ukraine have improved due to the use of incentives, pamphlets describing the study; greeting cards; study ID cards; coffee and chairs in the screening centers; and other measures. The number of examinations in Belarus has increased recently, but not the response rate. June plenary meeting to be held in Gomel will address incentives, development of pamphlets and other measures to increase response rates.

2. **Reimbursement of Subjects for Travel and other Expenses:** Ukraine has implemented a financial incentive program, which is working well and improving response rates. The Belarusian collaborators are considering using incentives, but there are legal obstacles to overcome. This will be a topic of the June meeting in Gomel. Dr. Masnyk is investigating the possibility of providing incentive money in Belarus through the International Red Cross.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Develop mechanism for providing reimbursement of Belarusian subjects for travel and other expenses.	Dr. Masynk		

3. ^{de}**Resign of Subsequent Screening Procedures:** The Screening Subcommittee (Dr. Geoff Howe, Dr. Robert McConnell, Dr. Daniel Fink, Dr. Jacob Robbins) has not met yet due to scheduling difficulties. Dr. Thomas will attempt to schedule a meeting in May.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Schedule a meeting of the Screening Subcommittee to develop recommendations on the nature and frequency of rescreening	Dr. Thomas	May, 2000	

4. **Selection of the Second Sample:** The second sample has been selected in both countries. In Ukraine, we do not anticipate having to use the entire second sample because of the recent increase in response rates. The Belarusians have traced the sample and begun to issue invitations to screening. In general, members of the second samples have lower doses than members of the first sample.

5. **Data Entry Backlog in Ukraine:** The Pediatric Institute of Kiev has begun work on data entry in Ukraine and expects to have the backlog eliminated in Fall, 2000. Use of the redesigned quarterly report will be implemented next quarter. The data management system and quality control measures were described.

6. Data Documentation: The Pediatric Institute of Kiev is developing code books.

7. Standardization and streamlining of forms: Dr. Thomas and Dr. Brenner are working on improving the consistency of coding schemes across forms and will formulate new suggestions for changes after recommendations from the Rescreening Subcommittee and after May meeting of dosimetrists.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Streamline and standardize forms after receive recommendations from Rescreening Subcommittee and May meeting of dosimetrists.	Dr. Thomas Dr. Brenner		

8. Training: A Belarusian staff member will be attending the Johns Hopkins Summer Program, then spend time receiving training at IMS, Westat, and Columbia University. Training in field methods occurred in December, 1999, in Ukraine. An Epicure class was given in February, 2000, in Kiev for scientists from Ukraine and Belarus.

9. Equipment: Supplying equipment is a continuing problem for the program. Annual requests are made by our collaborators to Columbia University, who is working through the STCU to supply needs in Ukraine. Efforts to establish a supply mechanism through the ISTC in Belarus are still underway. The paperwork must go through Minsk, Moscow, and the U.S. State Department. Dr. Masnyk hopes the agreements will be in place by January, 2001. In the interim, some supplies are being provided through a Columbia University subcontract directly with the Belarusian institute. Nothing has reached them since January, 2000.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Continue efforts to establish a reliable mechanism through the ISTC or other means to provide equipment and other support to Belarus.	Dr. Masnyk		

10. Plan for a New Screening Center in Gomel: Screening activity in Gomel has increased, but a full center has not been established yet because of the lack of a mechanism to supply equipment. See # 9.

11. Quarterly Report Format: The new quarterly report format will be implemented this year for the April-June reporting period.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Present the new quarterly report format to COP in July.	Dr. Thomas	July, 2000	COP

12. Publications in the Scientific Literature: An approval process has been established. The clearance process for meeting abstracts and papers is through the Belarusian or Ukrainian Project Director, the NCI Project Director, the Head of the Chornobyl Research Unit, the Chief of the Radiation Epidemiology Branch, and the Deputy Director and Director of DCEG. NCI will only pay travel expenses for presentations that have been formally cleared. COP requested that a bibliography be assembled of all project-related papers and abstracts.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Develop and maintain a bibliography of all publications and abstracts related to the NCI-supported research on Chornobyl.	Dr. Luckyanov	July, 2000	COP

13. Improvement of Communication: Dr. Masnyk is establishing an E-mail address directory for all involved parties. Communications are particularly difficult with Belarus, but have improved recently with their move to a new building. A joint meeting of the epidemiologists and clinicians from Belarus and Ukraine is planned for June, 2000, in Kiev.

14. Referral Process and Follow-Up of Referred Patients: Development and documentation of consistent rules for referrals and follow-up of referred patients will be a topic of the meeting of clinicians from Ukraine and Belarus in June, 2000, in Kiev.

III. ACERER Subcommittee Review of NCI Chornobyl Research Program

COP members received a copy of an E-mail from Arthur Schletty, CDC, describing the success of the ACERER Subcommittee's trip to Belarus and Ukraine and expressing gratitude for the assistance received from the CRU and Columbia, particularly Dr. Masnyk, Ms. Stine, and Dr. Robert McConnell. The results of the Subcommittee's review of the NCI Chornobyl Research Program will be presented on June 7, 2000, at an ACERER meeting in Columbia, Maryland. The draft agenda for the meeting was distributed.

IV. Report on Meeting Between NCI and Columbia on Contract Costs

Sharon Miller, NCI Contracting Officer, reported on an April 26, 2000, meeting between Columbia University and NCI on contract costs for this year, as well as scope of work and costs related to future option years. Based on the December, 1999, financial report, it appeared that the contract would have an overrun this year of \$1.5 million. Through questions from NCI and

written responses from Columbia, the estimate of the overrun was reduced to \$1.1 million. Billing methods were reviewed. Proposals were made to reduce the indirect charges for some of the supplies, to change the financial reporting format to clarify the direct and indirect charges, and to better document travel and consultant costs. Another meeting is scheduled for May, 2000.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Continue to identify means to reduce contract costs and to develop final estimate of funds needed for the rest of this fiscal year.	Ms. Miller Dr. Masnyk		

V. Leukemia Study

A. "Stopping Rules"

A new version of the evaluation criteria, modified by Dr. Zahm, was distributed and accepted by COP.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Evaluation criteria will be sent to Dr. Romanenko	Dr. Masnyk	May, 2000	

B. External Advisory Group

Nominations reviewed and additional names were suggested. It was decided that prospective members should not have received any contract money from DCEG in the past. After finalizing the nominations, Dr. Fraumeni will issue invitations to serve on the committee, which will not have Ukrainian members or necessarily be a subcommittee of the NCI Board of Scientific Counselors.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Finalize nominee lists and contact to determine interest in serving on Advisory Group.	Dr. Zahm with REB/CRU	July	
2. Draft formal letter of invitation for Dr. Fraumeni's signature.	Dr. Zahm		

C. Protocol

Dr. Beebe distributed an April 27, 2000 memo describing recommendations for protocol changes from the NCI Working Group. COP approved all recommended changes except the proposal to extract DNA from buccal mucosal cells prior to storage. COP members did not think that loss of DNA during storage was sufficient to warrant the expense and staff burden involved with extraction prior to storage. DCEG experts will be contacted to learn of latest results on DNA loss. If loss is minimal, the recommendation to extract DNA will be rejected.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Distribute the April 27, 2000 memo to COP members who were unable to attend the meeting.	Dr. Zahm	5/2/00	COP
2. Contact DCEG experts to assess risk of reduction of DNA yield from buccal cells during storage.	Dr. Zahm Dr. Beebe	5/8/00	Dr. Beebe

VI. Proposed Meeting of International Researchers Conducting Chornobyl-Related Research

The speakers for the symposium on Chornobyl research scheduled for the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology meeting in August, 2000, appear to be limited to researchers who have been members of the Office of Naval Research Consortium. The CRU will continue to plan a meeting of all groups involved in Chornobyl-related research.

Action Items	Responsible	Date Due	Due To
1. Continue to develop plans for a meeting of all international groups involved in Chornobyl-related research, possibly in November, 2000.	Dr. Thomas		

Future COP Meetings, 10:30-12:30, EPS/7107:

July 17
Sept. 5
Oct. 2

Nov. 6, if needed
Nov. 13-16, Tri-National Thyroid Study
Collaborators Meeting
Dec. 11